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HOSPITAL TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

COLOUR CODE OF FLEXIBLE CABLES AND CORDS

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MINISTRY OF HEALTH : LONDON : HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
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Colour Code of Flexible Cables and Cords

1. The nationally accepted colour code for electric supply flexible cables and cords in the United Kingdom is red for the "line" conductor, black for the "neutral" conductor and green for the "earth" conductor. This differs from the colour codes which have been adopted by some other countries. For example, some countries use red to denote the earthing conductor, and this has resulted in dangerous conditions where it has led to imported appliances being incorrectly connected to the electricity supply.

2. Attempts have been made for some time to obtain agreement on the adoption of an International Colour Code for flexible supply cables and cords and some progress has been made. The International Commission on Rules for the Approval of Electrical Equipment (C.E.E.) agreed that the earthing core should be identified by a combination of the colours green and yellow and recommended to its fifteen member countries that they should endeavour to introduce these colours in their national standards before 1st July, 1961. The Institution of Electrical Engineers and British Standards Institution have adopted this combination of colours as an alternative to green for the earth conductor in flexible cables and cords.

3. As yet it has not been possible for the C.E.E. to reach agreement on a common colour code for the "line" and "neutral" conductors, but the agreement on the earth conductor should assist to a useful extent in reducing the risk arising from the present diverse practices.

4. It is recommended, therefore, that for all electrical equipment connected to the electricity supply by flexible cables or cords, and requiring an earth connection, it is specified that the earth conductor should be coloured green or green/yellow. Red and black should be specified for the "line" and "neutral" cores respectively. All apparatus already in use should be made to conform to this specification if it does not already do so.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

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